



Warning against some books which distort the history of the Sahabah



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Warning against some books which Distort the history of the Sahabah

1. Al Imamah wa al Siyasah

One of the books that distort the history of early Islam is *al Imamah wa al Siyasah*, which is [falsely] attributed to Ibn Qutaybah. Dr. 'Abdullah 'Usaylan, in his book *al Imamah wa al Siyasah fi Mizan al Tahqiq al 'Ilmi*, lists a number of points proving that this book attributed to Imam Ibn Qutaybah is false and is a fabrication. The evidence to that effect includes the following:

- None of those who wrote biographies of Ibn Qutaybah said that he wrote a book on history called *al Imamah wa al Siyasah*, and we do not know of any book of history that he wrote except for a book called *al Ma'arif*.

- Reading through the book gives one the impression that Ibn Qutaybah lived in Damascus and the Maghrib^[1]; whereas, he never left Baghdad except to go to al Daynur.
- The methodology and style used by the author of *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* is completely different from the methodology and style of Ibn Qutaybah, as seen in those of his books that still exist. Ibn Qutaybah wrote lengthy introductions to his books, explaining his methodology and his aim in writing the book. In contrast, the author of *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* writes a very short introduction that is no more than three lines. In addition, there are differences in style. We do not see this methodology in the books of Ibn Qutaybah.
- The author of *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* narrates from Ibn Abi Layla in a way that gives the impression that he met him. But this Ibn Abi Layla is Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Rahman ibn Abi Layla al Faqih, the judge of Kufah, who died in 148 A.H. It is well known that Ibn Qutaybah was not born until 213 A.H, sixty-five years after the death of Ibn Abi Layla.
- The narrators and Shuyukh from whom Ibn Qutaybah usually narrates in his books are not mentioned anywhere in this book.
- A large segment of his reports are narrated using phrases that indicate a problem with the reports. It often says:

“They mentioned from some of the Egyptians”, “They mentioned from Muhammad ibn Sulaiman from some of the Shuyukh of the people of Egypt”, “Some of the Shuyukh of the Maghrib told us”, or “They mentioned from some of the Shuyukh.” Such phrases are far removed from the usual style and phraseology of Ibn Qutaybah and are not used in any of his books.

- The author of *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* narrates from two of the senior scholars in Egypt, but Ibn Qutaybah never went to Egypt and never learned from these two scholars.^[2]
- Ibn Qutaybah is held in high esteem by the scholars, who regard him as one of Ahl as-Sunnah, trustworthy in his knowledge and religious commitment. Al Salafi said:

Ibn Qutaybah was one of the trustworthy and one of Ahlus Sunnah.

- Ibn Hazm said concerning him:

He was trustworthy in his knowledge and religious commitment.

- Al Khatib al Baghdadi said likewise.
- Ibn Taymiyah said concerning him:

Ibn Qutaybah is one of the followers of Ahmed and Ishaq and one of the supporters of the Sunni mazhab.^[3]

If a man is held in such high esteem by the authentic scholars, does it make sense for him to be the author of a book like *al Imamah wa al Siyasah*, which distorts history and attributes to the Sahabah that which is no true?^[4]

- Dr. 'Ali Nufay' al 'Alyani says in his book *'Aqidat al Imam Ibn Qutaybah*, concerning *al Imamah wa al Siyasah*:

After a critical reading of the book *al Imamah wa al Siyasah*, in my view it is most likely that the author of *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* was an evil Rafidi who wanted to attribute this book to Ibn Qutaybah because his books are numerous and because he was well known among the people for

supporting *Ahl al Hadith* (the people of ahadith). He may have been one of the Rawafid of the Maghrib, as Ibn Qutaybah enjoyed a good reputation in the Maghrib.^[5]

What makes it likely that the author of *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* was a Rafidi is the following:

- The author of *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* claims that 'Ali *radiya Llahu 'anhu* said to the Muhajirin:

I urge you by Allah, O Muhajirin, not to take the authority of Muhammad among the Arabs out of his house and home to yours and not to deprive his family of their rights, for by Allah, O Muhajirin; we are more entitled to that because we are *Ahlul Bayt* (the members of the Rasul's '*salla Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam* household) and are more entitled to this than you. By Allah, this is our right; do not follow whims and desires lest you go astray from the path of Allah.^[6]

No one believes that the Khilafah is the hereditary right of Ahlul Bayt except the **Shia**.

- The author of *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* harshly criticises the Sahabah of the Rasul of Allah '*salla Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*. He depicts Ibn 'Umar *radiya Llahu 'anhu* as a coward and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas *radiya Llahu 'anhu* as jealous; he says that Muhammad ibn Maslamah got angry with 'Ali ibn Abi Talib *radiya Llahu 'anhu* because he killed the Jew Marhab in Khaybar, and that 'Aisha *radiya Llahu 'anha* ordered that 'Uthman *radiya Llahu 'anhu* be killed.^[7] Criticism of the Sahabah is one of the most well-known characteristics of the Rawafid; the Khawarij do something similar, but they do not criticise the majority of the Sahabah.^[8]
- The author of *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* says that Mukhtar ibn Abi 'Ubaid was killed by Mus'ab ibn Zubair because he called people to rally behind the household of the Rasul of Allah '*salla Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam* but he neglects to mention the myths introduced by Mukhtar or his claim of receiving revelation.^[9] The Rawafid are the ones who love Mukhtar ibn Abi 'Ubaid because he took revenge on the murderers of Hussain *radiya Llahu 'anhu*. It should also be noted that Ibn Qutaybah *rahimahu Llah* mentioned Mukhtar among those who rebelled against legitimate authority, and he said that Mukhtar used to claim that Jibril '*alayh al Salam* came down to him.^[10]
- The author of *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* wrote only about twenty-five pages concerning the khilafah of the first three khulafa' Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman *radiya Llahu 'anhum*, whereas he wrote two hundred pages about the fitnah that occurred among the Sahabah. In other words, he reduced the greatest period of history to a few pages but wrote pages upon pages of false history, of which nothing is proven except a little. This is one of the known attributes of the Rawafid. We seek refuge with Allah from misguidance and betrayal.
- Al Sayed Mahmud Shukri al Alusi says in *Mukhtasar al Tuhfah al Ithna 'Ashariyyah*:

Part of their (the Rawafid) crafty tricks is that they look at the names of scholars who are respected by Ahl as-Sunnah, and whenever they find one who has the same name as one of their own scholars, they attribute the reports of that Shia scholar to him (the Sunni scholar). Those Sunnis who are unaware of this will think that this is one of their (Sunni) A'immah and will accept his words and rely on his reports.

For example, al Suddi is the name of two men, one of whom is al Suddi the elder and the other is al Suddi the younger. The elder al Suddi is one of the trustworthy Sunni scholars, whereas the younger is one of the fabricators and liars and is an extreme Rafidi. 'Abdullah ibn Qutaybah is an extreme Rafidi whereas

‘Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah is a trustworthy Sunni scholar who wrote a book called al Ma’arif, the Rafidi wrote a book which he also called al Ma’arif, with the aim of misleading people.^[11]

This is what makes it likely that the book *al Imamah wa al Siyasah* was written by the Rafidi Ibn Qutaybah and not by the trustworthy Sunni Ibn Qutaybah; people got confused by the similarity of names.^[12] And Allah knows best.

2. Nahj al Balaghah

One of the books that played a role in distorting the history of the Sahabah is the book called *Nahj al Balaghah*. This book is faulty in terms of both its chains of narration and its text. It was compiled three and a half centuries after ‘Ali *radiya Llahu ‘anhu* passed away, without any chain of narration. The **Shia** attributed *Nahj al Balaghah* to al Sharif al Radi, who was not accepted by the hadith scholars even when he gave a chain of narrators, in cases where the reports support his innovations, so how about if no chain of narration is given at all, as is the case in *Nahj al Balaghah*? As for the one whom the scholars accused of lying, that is his brother ‘Ali.^[13] The scholars discussed him and said:

- Ibn Khallikan said in Tarjamat al Sharif al Murtadi:

The scholars differed concerning the book *Nahj al Balaghah*, which is a compilation of the words of Imam ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib *radiya Llahu ‘anhu*, as to whether it was compiled by ‘Ali or his brother al Radiy. It was said that these were not the words of ‘Ali; rather the one who compiled it and attributed it to him was the one who fabricated it. And Allah knows best.^[14]

- Al Dhahabi said:

The one who studies *Nahj al Balaghah* will be certain that it is falsely attributed to Amir al Mu’minin ‘Ali *radiya Llahu ‘anhu*. It contains blatant insults and criticism of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar *radiya Llahu ‘anhuma* as well as contradictions, and is written in a weak and pallid style such that anyone who knows anything about the Qurayshi Sahabah and those who came after them, and their way of thinking, will be certain that most of it is false.^[15]

- Ibn Taymiyyah said:

The scholars know that most of the speeches in this book are fabricated and falsely attributed to ‘Ali *radiya Llahu ‘anhu*, hence we do not find most of it in earlier books, and it has no known chain of transmission.^[16]

- Ibn Hajar accuses al Sharif al Murtadi of fabricating it and says:

The one who studies it will be certain that it is falsely attributed to Amir al Mu'minin 'Ali *radiya Llahu 'anhu*, and most of it is false.^[17]

Based on the above comments and others, a number of researchers discussed this topic and said that this book cannot be soundly attributed to Imam 'Ali *radiya Llahu 'anhu*.^[18]

We may note some of the most important reasons why the early and modern scholars doubted the attribution of *Nahj al Balaghah* to Imam 'Ali *radiya Llahu 'anhu*:

- It is devoid of documented chains of narration that would support the attribution of its words to 'Ali *radiya Llahu 'anhu*.
- It contains a large number of lengthy speeches, which would have been difficult to memorise without getting mixed up at that time, before the era of compiling and writing things down. Even the speeches of the Rasul of Allah '*salla Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*' have not reached us in complete form, despite the great deal of care and attention given to them.
- We can see many of its statements and speeches in trustworthy sources where they are attributed to someone other than 'Ali *radiya Llahu 'anhu*, but the author of *Nahj al Balaghah* attributes them to him.
- This book contains words that criticise the Rightly Guided Khulafa' who preceded 'Ali *radiya Llahu 'anhu*, in a manner that is not befitting for him or them; these words contradict what is known about 'Ali's *radiya Llahu 'anhu* respect for them. One example is the report of the speech known as Shaqshaqiyyah, in which his keenness to become khalifah is demonstrated, even though he was known to be an ascetic who cared little about worldly matters.
- The prevalence of rhymed prose in the book. A number of literary critics think that so much rhymed prose is not in accordance with the spirit of 'Ali's *radiya Llahu 'anhu* era, when people sought to avoid overdoing things, even though the kind of rhymed prose that comes without much effort was not far removed from the spirit of that time.
- Writing in a very ornate manner, which is a demonstration of literary ability. This is a feature of the 'Abbasid era, with its love of flowery speech such as we find in the description of peacocks, bats, bees, ants, plants, clouds and so on.
- The philosophical style that is scattered throughout the book was unknown to the Muslims until the third century A.H, when Greek, Persian and Indian books were translated. This is more like the words of the philosophers and orators than the words of the Sahabah and the Rightly Guided Khulafa'.^[19]

We should be wary of this book when talking about the Sahabah and what happened between them and Amir al Mu'minin 'Ali *radiya Llahu 'anhu*. We should measure its texts against Qur'an and Sunnah; whatever is in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, there is nothing wrong with referring to it, but whatever is contrary to them, we should pay no attention to it.

3. Al Aghani by al Isfahani

The book *al Aghani* by Abu al Faraj al Isfahani is regarded as a book of literature, entertainment and poetry that is to be sung; it is not a book of knowledge, history and Islamic jurisprudence. It is very famous in the

realm of literature and history, but that does not mean that we should keep quiet about what is mentioned in it of Shu'ubiyyah,^[20] fabrication, blatant lies, slander and criticism. The Iraqi poet, Professor Walid al A'dhami, has written a valuable book called *al Saif al Yamani fi Nahr al Isfahani Sahib al Aghani*, in which he makes a serious effort to distinguish between what is rubbish and what may be accepted, what is poison and what is honey.

He highlights what the book contains of lies, inflammatory Shu'ubiyyah and hatred, which seethes in the heart like a boiling cauldron. He refutes the false and unauthenticated reports that al Isfahani compiled, which undermine the people of the Rasul's '*salla Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*' household and distort their history and their image. He also discusses the false claims made by al Isfahani with regard to Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan *radiya Llahu 'anhu* and the Umayyad khulafa', as well as the reports that are fabricated and falsely attributed to them. In this valuable book, the great scholar and poet Professor Walid al A'dhami also discusses other kinds of falsehood, including the fabricated stories that undermine Islamic belief and religion and give precedence to ignorance over Islam.^[21]

The early scholars commented on Abu al Faraj al Isfahani:

- Al Khatib al Baghdadi said:

Abu al Faraj al Isfahani was the worst of liars; he used to buy a lot of worthless books, then all that he wrote was based on them.^[22]

- Ibn al Jawzi said:

The reports of such a man cannot be trusted, and you will find in his books evidence to prove that he is an evildoer. He encourages the drinking of alcohol and may even attribute that to himself. The one who studies the book *al Aghani* will see all kinds of evils.^[23]

- Al Dhahabi said:

I saw our Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah classifying him as weak, criticising him with regard to his reports and finding what was in his book outrageous.^[24]

4. Tarikh al Ya'qubi

The author's full name is Ahmed ibn Abi Yaqub Ishaq ibn Jafar ibn Wahb ibn Wadih. He was from Baghdad, and he died in the year 290 A.H. He was an Imami Shia historian who worked as a scribe in the ministries of the 'Abbasid state, so he was known as 'the 'Abbasid scribe'. Al Yaqubi presented the history of the Islamic state from a purely Imami Shia point of view. He did not acknowledge the khilafah of anyone except 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and his sons *radiya Llahu 'anhu*, in the sequence of A'immah accepted by the Shia, and he referred to 'Ali as the rightful, appointed heir of the Rasul of Allah '*salla Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*'. When he spoke of the khilafah of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman *radiya Llahu 'anhum*, he did not give them the title of 'khalifah'; rather he said:

So-and-so took charge.

He did not mention any of them without reviling him. He narrated bad reports about 'Aisha *radiya Llahu 'anha* and treated other senior Sahabah in like manner, narrating corrupt reports about 'Uthman *radiya Llahu 'anhu*^[25] and also about Khalid ibn al Walid,^[26] 'Amr ibn al 'As^[27] and Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan.^[28] He discussed in, a very negative light the meeting in which Abu Bakr was first given the oath of allegiance after the death of the Rasul '*salla Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*,^[29] claiming that it was a conspiracy to take the khilafah away from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib *radiya Llahu 'anhu* who, in his view, was the rightful successor. His way of fabricating false accusations is typical of the way of his fellow Shia and Rawafid; it involves either fabricating the report altogether,^[30] adding something to the report,^[31] or quoting it out of context to distort its meaning.

When he mentions the Umayyad khulafa', he describes them as kings, but when he mentions the 'Abbasid khulafa', he calls them 'Khulafa'. In his book *al Buldan*, he also calls their state 'the blessed state',^[32] which is a reflection of his hypocrisy and practice of taqiyyah (dissimulation). This book is an example of the deviation and distortion to be found in the writing of Islamic history, but it was used as a reference by many Orientalists and westernised Muslims who undermined Islamic history and the images of its figures. In fact, this book is worthless from an academic point of view; the first part is mostly filled with stories, myths and legends, and the second part is written from a partisan point of view. It is also lacking the simplest principles of academic authentication.^[33]

5. Muruj al Dhahab by Al Mas'udi

The book *Muruj al Dhahab wa Ma'adin al Jawhar* was written by al Mas'udi, whose full name is Abu al Hasan 'Ali ibn al Hussain ibn 'Ali al Mas'udi; he was one of the descendants of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud *radiya Llahu 'anhu*.^[34]

It was said that he was a man from 'the Maghrib',^[35] but al Mas'udi himself stated that he was from Iraq and that he moved to Egypt.^[36] If what was meant by 'the Maghrib' was the western part of the Arab world as opposed to the eastern part, then Egypt is part of the western part of the Muslim world, so there is no contradiction.^[37]

Al Mas'udi was a Shia, of whom Ibn Hajar said:

His books are filled with proof that he was a Shia and Mu'tazilite.^[38]

Al Mas'udi argued that the concept of the rightful, appointed heir for the imamate was known and established from the time of Adam '*alayh al Salam* and that it was transmitted from generation to generation until the time of our Rasul '*salla Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*. Ibn Hajar mentioned the differences among the people after that with regard to whether there is a divine text or it is to be left for people to choose, and the Imami Shia believe that there is a text.^[39]

In his book *Muruj al Dhahab*, Al Mas'udi paid a great deal of attention to the events surrounding 'Ali ibn Abi Talib *radiya Llahu 'anhu*; he paid more attention to him than he did to the life of the Rasul of Allah '*salla Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*' in the same book.^[40] He focused his attention on the household of 'Ali *radiya Llahu 'anhu* and followed reports on them very clearly in his book *Muruj al Dhahab*.^[41] He tried shamelessly to distort the history of the first generation of Islam.

These are some of the classical books that we warn against, and which had a great impact on the writings of some contemporary authors such Taha Hussain (*al Fitnat al Kubra – 'Ali wa Banuhu*) and al 'Aqqad ((*al 'Abqariyat* series). They quoted numerous fabricated and weak reports and based their analysis on them; hence they were mistaken in their conclusions and made serious errors concerning the Sahabah *radiya Llahu 'anhum*.

The same is true of 'Abdul Wahhab al Najjar in his book *al Khulafa' al Rashidin*, where he quotes texts of the reports from *al Imamah wa al Siyasah*, and Hasan Ibrahim in his book '*Amr ibn al 'As*, in which he concludes, on the basis of fabricated Rafidi reports, that 'Amr ibn al 'As was a man in pursuit of his own interests and ambitions who would not get involved in any matter unless he could see some worldly interest or benefits for himself.^[42]

There are also other researchers who followed the same methodology and thus entered dark tunnels because of their being far removed from the methodology of Ahlus Sunnah wa I-Jama'ah when dealing with the huge accumulation of historical reports.

The Orientalists and Islamic history

One of the worst groups when it comes to distorting Islamic history is the Rafidi **Shia**, of all groups and types. They were among the earliest of the groups to emerge, and they have a hierarchical political system and their own set of deviant beliefs and ideology.

This is the group that tells the most lies against its opponents, and they are among the most vehemently opposed of people towards the Sahabah, as we will see. Among the basic foundations of their belief are impugning the Sahabah and denouncing them as disbelievers, especially the 'two shuyukh' Abu Bakr and 'Umar *radiya Llahu 'anhuma*, whom they refer to as 'sorcery and evil'.^[43]

The Shia have the greatest number of narrators and storytellers who took on the mission of spreading their lies and fabrications and compiling them in books and essays about the events of Islamic history, especially internal events. Shu'ubiyah and tribalism also had an effect on the fabrication of historical reports and stories aimed at distorting Islamic history and 'proving' the superiority of one sect or people or race over another, ignoring the shari'ah criterion of superiority, namely taqwa.

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَى

Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that [believer] who has Taqwa.^[44]

The deviant sects took advantage of the prevalence of storytellers, the ignorance and lack of knowledge of the Sunnah on the part of most of the people, and the fact that some of them had drifted away from the truth while seeking to earn a living. They spread their lies and fabricated stories, which these storytellers welcomed and spread among the common folk, without realising the situation.

Hundreds of fabricated reports about the Sahabah, Tabi'in and Muslim scholars, which undermined them and distorted their history, were disseminated through them. But by His grace and blessing, Allah guided a number of scholarly critics, who strove hard to examine the narrators and narrations, distinguishing between true and false and defending the beliefs and history of the ummah. The Sunni scholars put a great deal of effort into pointing out the fabricated reports by quoting them and highlighting those narrators who were weak, suspicious, or followers of whims and desires. They drew up a methodology for examining the reports and determining which to accept, and they were successful in these efforts.

Among the most prominent of those who took on the mission of explaining historical errors and pointing out flaws in the false reports were: al Qadi Ibn al 'Arabi in *al 'Awasim min al Qawasim*; Imam ibn Taymiyyah in many of his books and essays, especially his valuable book *Minhaj al Sunnah al Nabawiyyah fi Naqd Kalam al Shia wa al Qadariyyah*; the critic al Dhahabi in many of his historical writings such as *Siyar A'lam al Nubala'*, *Tarikh al Islam* and *Mizan al I'tidal fi Naqd al Rijal*; al Hafiz^[45] Ibn Kathir, the interpreter of Qur'an and historian, in his book *Al Bidayah wa al Nihayah*; al Hafiz Ibn Hajar al 'Asqalani in his books *Fath al Bari fi Sharh Sahih al Bukhari*, *Lisan al Mizan*, *Tahdhib al Tahdhib* and *Al Isabah fi Tamiz al Sahabah*.

With regard to the methods used by the Shia to distort the historical events and images of the early generation of the Sahabah and Tabi'in, there were many ways, including:

- Outright fabrications and Lies
- Mentioning a true story or incident, but adding or omitting details so as to distort it and give the opposite idea.
- Quoting reports out of context, so that the meaning is distorted, and a false interpretation of events is given.
- Highlighting shortcomings and mistakes while concealing well-established facts.
- Fabricating poetry and attributing it to some poets, in order to support some so-called historical events, because Arabic poetry is regarded as a historical document and proof that helps to authenticate reports.
- Fabricating books and essays and falsely attributing them to scholars and well known characters, as the Rawafid fabricated the book *al Imamah al Siyasah*, which they attributed to Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah al Dinwari because he was famous among and trusted by the Sunnis, as we have seen above.

In the last century, these lies and distortions were welcomed by Western scholars and writers, such as Orientalists and missionaries, during the period in which they invaded and colonised Muslim countries. They found in this material what they were looking for, and they started to highlight it and focus on it. Motivated by their fanaticism and hatred of the Muslims, they added lies by inventing events that never happened or misinterpreting historical events, purposely distorting and misinterpreting the facts to support their beliefs.

This group was then supported by a large number of the students of the Orientalists from Arab and Muslim countries, who adopted their research methodology and their ideas and concepts for analysing and interpreting history; they took up the banner after the Europeans departed from the Muslim lands.

Thus the harm that they did was worse and greater than that of their Orientalist teachers and their predecessors among the misguided and innovating groups. That is because they, like their teachers, claimed to be following a pure academic spirit and scientific method in research by giving up any and all preconceptions, but in fact most of them gave up nothing but their faith.

They had no sincerity towards the truth and no knowledge of following a sound academic methodology in proving historical events, such as comparing reports, knowing the value of the sources to which they were referring and the extent to which the narrators were authentic and accurate, and studying the context of those narrators in terms of human nature and development.^[46]

They did not learn anything of scientific or academic methodology except for superficial matters such as how to write footnotes and put together bibliographies, and so on. This is probably what scientific methodology meant to them.^[47]

Muhib al Din al Khatib said:

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Those who received a foreign education are controlled by the illusion that they are disconnected from that past, and their attitude towards its figures is like that of a public attorney towards the accused. Indeed, some of them even went to extremes to appear in front of others as if they had no connection with any part of Arab and Muslim history, following in the footsteps of the Orientalists with their suspicious views of the past. They have a sense of contentment and follow their whims and desires, at the time when fairness dictates that they should verify the matter, in order to reach a conclusion and feel at ease with it before they have enough evidence to prove it.^[48]

One of the most important means by which the Orientalists and their students sought to distort the facts of Islamic history are:

Misinterpreting historical events on the basis of modern concepts and ideas and in accordance with whatever crossed their minds, without even verifying the historical events in the first place and without paying any attention to the historical context in which the event took place, the people's circumstances at that time, or the beliefs that were guiding them and that they were following. Before discussing any event, it is essential to first verify that it took place; the fact that it is mentioned in some book is not sufficient to prove it.^[49] The stage of verifying precedes the stage of discussing and interpreting historical events.

The interpretation should also be in accordance with the wording of the historical report, as well as the context of the research and the general nature of the society, era and environment in which the event took place. This

interpretation of the historical event should not contradict another incident or series of incidents that are proven to have happened.

Examination of an event should not be limited to one aspect only, as is the habit of many contemporary schools of thought when studying history; instead, all the factors that have an impact on the event should be scrutinised, especially ideological and intellectual factors. Even after paying attention to all of the above, the interpretation of historical events is no more than a human effort, which may be right or wrong. Some have given prominence to the history of misguided groups and tried to exaggerate their role, depicting them as reformers who were wronged or oppressed.

They have tried to suggest that Muslim historians were unfair to groups like the Qaramitah, Ismaili, Imami Rafidah, Fatimids, Zanj, Ikhwan al Safa and the Khawarij. In the view of these historians, all of these groups were advocates of reform, justice, freedom and equality, and their uprisings were aimed at putting an end to injustice and oppression.

This propaganda against Islamic history, and trying to crowd out the biographies of heroes and callers to Islam with the biographies of the leaders of misguided groups, is something that comes as no surprise from people who are not Muslims, because they are motivated by their own beliefs and aims to plot against Islam with all possible efforts by night and day, in secret and openly. One cannot expect people who have no faith and who belong to the disbelieving groups to do anything other than to support their brothers in misguidance.

What some may find strange however is that after the collapse of Orientalism, the banner of distortion was taken up by writers who have Muslim names and are Muslims, who tried to spread this poison among their fellow Muslims so as to divert the ignorant away from the straight path. These writers rely on dubious, weak, worthless reports which they pick up from literature, fairy stories, folktales and weak or falsely attributed books.

These books are what they use as proof, along with what they find of fabricated reports in al Tabari and al Mas'udi; even though they know that they are not regarded as reliable academic references. This transgression against and distortion of Islamic history – especially the history of the early generations – has been done by a number of means, namely:

1. Choosing and focusing on particular events, such as battles and wars, and depicting them incorrectly so as to take away the idea of jihad for the sake of Allah, or focusing on events and internal turmoil with the aim of presenting the dispute among the Sahabah *radiya Llahu 'anhum* as if it were a typical example of conflict and political scheming like those of modern times.
2. Concealing and ignoring everything that could set a good example and motivate people.
3. Shedding doubt by targeting history and its celebrated figures, as well as the Muslim historians themselves, and casting aspersions on their knowledge and authenticity.
4. Fragmenting Islamic history into small, disparate parts as if there is no connection between them, such as dividing Islamic history on the basis of regions, race and so on.

All of these means are attempts to destroy our Islamic history and its beautiful features, and to prevent it from becoming a good example to follow and a means of sound education.

Hence the Muslim historians have to know about these things and be wary of them. They should also be aware of those who followed the Orientalists in their views and methodology, and they should not accept anything from them except with great caution.

If our scholars *rahimahu Llah* criticise many narrators of history and regard their reports as weak because they quote from the People of the Book and their Jewish and Christian sources, then we should be equally cautious in accepting the views and interpretations of those who learned from the Orientalists. As a matter of fact, we should reject and disregard them unless there is clear proof to support them.^[50]

[1] The Maghrib literally means the place of sunset, or the west. It is also used to refer to the countries of North Africa (excluding Egypt), or specifically to Morocco. [Editor]

[2] Ali al 'Alyani: *'Aqidat al Imam Ibn Qutaybah*, p. 90

[3] *Lisan al Mizan*, 3/357; *Tahqiq Mawaqif al Sahabah*, 2/144

[4] *Tahqiq Mawaqif al Sahabah*, 2/144

[5] Ibn Taymiyah: *Al Fatawa*, 17/391

[6] *Al Imamah wa al Siyasah*, 1/12

[7] *Al Imamah wa al Siyasah*, 1/54,55

[8] Ali 'Alyani: *'Aqidah al Imam Ibn Qutaybah*, p. 91

[9] *Al Imamah wa al Siyasah*, 2/20

[10] *Al Ma'arif*, p. 401

[11] Al Alusi: *Mukhtasar al Tuhfah. al Ithna 'Ashariyyah*, p. 32

[12] *'Aqidah al Imam Ibn Qutaybah*, p. 93

[13] Nayif Ma'ruf: *Al Adab al Islami*, p. 53

[14] *Al Wafiyat*, 3/124

[15] *Mizan al I'tidal*, 3/124

[16] *Minhaj al Sunnah*, 4124

[17] *Lisan al Mizan*, 4/223

[18] Nayaf Ma'ruf: *Al Adab al Islami*, p. 53

[19] *Al Adab al Islami*, p. 54, 55

[20] Derived from the Arabic word sha'b meaning people, nation, or race. The Shu'ubiyah movement advocated equality of Arabs and non-Arabs. The term is often used by Arabs in a more specific context that refers to the resentment of Arabs by Persians that occurred in the 9th and 10th century CE [Editor]

[21] Al A'dhami: *Al Saif al Yamani fi Nahr al Isfahani Sahib al Aghani*,

[22] *Tarikh Baghdad*, 11/398

[23] *Al Muntadhim*, 7/40, 41

[24] *Mizan al I'tidal*, 3/123

[25] *Tarikh al Ya'qubi*, 2/180-183

[26] op. cit., 2/131

[27] op. cit., 2/222

[28] op. cit., 2/232-238

[29] op. cit., 2/123-126

[30] *Manhaj Kitabat at-Tarikh al Islami*, p. 431

[31] ibid.

[32] al Ya'qubi: *Kitab al Buldan*, p. 432

[33] *Manhaj Kitabat at-Tarikh al Islami*, p. 432

[34] Ibn an-Nadim: *al Fihrist*, p. 171; *Siyar A'lam al Nubala'*

[35] *Al Fihrist*, p. 117.

[36] *Mu'jam al Udaba'*, 13/91-93

[37] *Manhaj al Mas'udi fi Kitabat al Tarikh*, p. 44; *Athar al Tashayyu'*, p. 243

[38] *Lisan al Mizan*, 4/225; *Athar al Tashayyu'* p. 246.

[39] *Muruj al Dhahab wa Ma'adin al Jawhar*, 1138

[40] *Athar al Tashayyu' 'ala al Riwayat al Tarikhiyyah*, p. 248

[41] *ibid.*

[42] Hasan Ibrahim: *Tarikh 'Amr ibn al 'As*, p. 206, 207

[43] Ihsan Ilahi Zahir: *Al Shia wa al Sunnah*, p. 32. This refers to verse 4:51 in the Quran: "... They believe in sorcery and Evil. ..."

[44] Surah al Hujarat: 13

[45] 'Al Hafiz' is an honorific title meaning 'the one who has memorised (the Qur'an)'. [Editor]

[46] Muhammad Samil: *Manhaj Kitabat al Tarikh al Islami*, p. 502

[47] *ibid.*

[48] *al Masadir al Ula li Tarikhina, Majallat al Azhar*, 1374 A.H

[49] *Manhaj Kitabat al Tarikh al Islami*, p. 504

[50] *Manhaj Kitabat al Tarikh al Islami*, p. 507

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